



What is Dry Mouth?

Dry mouth is having too little saliva to keep your mouth wet.

Without moisture it may be hard to:

- Eat
- Swallow
- Taste food
- Speak

How Saliva Protects Your Mouth

- Washes away food particles
- Kills bacteria
- Neutralizes the acids that cause tooth decay
- Strengthens teeth with minerals like calcium and fluoride
- Moistens your mouth, nose and throat



For more information call
1-888-4ELDERS

 **DELTA DENTAL**
Washington Dental Service
Foundation

Community Advocates for Oral Health

The Washington Dental Service Foundation is the state's largest foundation dedicated to improving oral health by supporting innovative approaches and focusing on oral disease prevention.

For more information on the Washington Dental Service Foundation visit:
www.deltadentalwa.com and click on Foundation



DRY MOUTH

Tooth decay in adult years is often caused by **dry mouth**.

 **DELTA DENTAL**
Washington Dental Service
Foundation

Community Advocates for Oral Health

Many Medications Cause Dry Mouth



Dry mouth is not a normal consequence of aging. However, it is very common among older adults.

Many prescription and over-the-counter medications cause dry mouth.

Examples are drugs that treat:

- Depression
- Parkinson's Disease
- Anxiety
- Allergies
- High Blood Pressure
- Pain

Cancer treatments and some health conditions can also cause dry mouth.

Do not stop taking your medications. Do talk with your pharmacist or doctor about dry mouth. There might be an alternative medication you can try. Have regular dental visits and tell your dentist if you have dry mouth.

Steps to Prevent Dry Mouth

1. Drink extra water.

Sip fluoridated water during the day and with meals.

2. Protect your teeth with fluoride.

Use a fluoride toothpaste and fluoride rinse. Talk with your dentist and doctor about fluoride varnish.

3. Use a saliva substitute.

Available in most pharmacies, saliva substitutes help moisten your mouth, reduce bacteria, and increase comfort. Use during the day and before bedtime.

4. Use sugarless gum or mints, especially those with xylitol.

Xylitol is a natural sweetener that protects teeth from decay.

5. Use a humidifier at night.



Avoid Painful Oral Disease

Dry mouth causes:

- Cavities in the roots of teeth
- Diseased gum tissue



Photo: O. Bernthal

The photo above shows root cavities, a common consequence of dry mouth.

If you have dry mouth, be sure to avoid:

- Candy, cough drops and drinks high in sugar
- Drinks with caffeine or alcohol
- Carbonated and citrus drinks – even diet sodas damage your teeth
- Mouthwash with alcohol
- Overly salty or spicy food
- Tobacco products

For more information, or help finding a dental provider

1-888-4ELDERS